

# Diabetes Self-Care Information and Record Booklet



Your personal guide.....  
what you do each day really matters.



# What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a common, controllable, life-long condition. Diabetes changes the way your body uses the food you eat. Your body turns food into sugar and uses this sugar for energy. Insulin is an important hormone that helps move the sugar from your blood into your body's cells. If your body does not make insulin or the insulin is not working well, sugar will build up in your blood. High blood sugar levels may cause damage to your kidneys, heart, eyes, and nerves by harming the blood vessels that lead to them.

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## Type 1 Diabetes:

With type 1 diabetes, the body makes little or no insulin on its own so insulin shots are needed. People with type 1 diabetes need to take insulin shots each day for the rest of their lives.

## Type 2 Diabetes:

With type 2 diabetes, the body makes some but not enough insulin, or the body may not be able to use insulin as it normally should. Medicine and/or insulin may be needed. It can be normal to use more medicine or insulin the longer you have type 2 diabetes. This does not mean you have failed to take care of yourself.

Having diabetes does not mean you are sick. People with diabetes can be healthy in the same way as people without diabetes by:

- Eating healthy food
- Being active
- Controlling weight or losing weight if needed
- Keeping blood sugars near normal
- Testing blood sugars
- Taking medicine as recommended

# What is Diabetes Self-Care?

Diabetes self-care means you are in charge of making healthy choices every day. Making healthy choices will keep blood sugar levels as close to normal as possible.

Below are a few helpful skills you can expect to learn to help you take care of your diabetes:

- ✓ How to make healthy food choices
- ✓ How to feel good about your lifestyle choices
- ✓ How to eat a healthy amount of food at each meal
- ✓ How to test blood sugars and safely dispose of your lancets and needles
- ✓ What your blood sugar numbers mean
- ✓ How your medicine and/or insulin work
- ✓ When to take your medicine and/or insulin
- ✓ What are possible side effects of your medicine and/or insulin
- ✓ What are healthy physical activities and why staying active is good for you
- ✓ What to do if your blood sugars are too high or too low
- ✓ How to reduce your risk of diabetes problems
- ✓ What diabetes care to ask for and what to expect
- ✓ Why it is important to wear a medical ID bracelet or necklace

Know your blood sugar numbers; if they are not at goal, talk about different treatment options with your health care provider. If you are taking diabetes pills, you may need to change the dose and/or start insulin shots. Your self-care skills and treatment may need to change the longer you have diabetes, if your lifestyle habits change, and as you age.

Remember, ask for help and support. Many health care providers can teach you new, positive ways to care for yourself. Understanding what you can do to stay healthy and reduce blood sugar levels is the first step.

# Things to Remember about Diabetes Self-Care

## Be patient with yourself

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People learn in different ways. Some things you will be able to learn quickly and other things will take you a little longer. Give yourself time to change habits and learn new information. Learning about diabetes self-care takes time and patience.

## Find a local diabetes self-management education program

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Many clinics offer individual and/or group classes to help people learn about diabetes self-care. Check with your health care provider to find a diabetes self-management education program in your area.

## Find local help and support

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When it comes to your health, you know yourself the best. Learn as much as you can about diabetes. Local help can include support groups and your library. Other reliable and trusted resources are listed on the back page of this booklet.

## Ask questions

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Diabetes information and treatment can be hard to understand. Health care providers want you to be successful. Be sure to tell your health care provider if you are having problems with any treatment. When you ask questions, health care providers learn more about you. Then together you can decide on the best ways to care for your diabetes.

## Prepare for a health emergency

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Carry 15 grams of quick-acting sugar (for example, 3-4 glucose tablets) with you, if you take insulin and/or medication to lower blood sugar. Wear a medical identification bracelet/necklace. Plan ahead and have adequate supplies to safely manage your diabetes.

# Recommended Care When You Have Diabetes

## LAB TESTS AND OTHER TESTS

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**A1C** – Have this checked every 3-6 months.



(**Ideal:** Less than 7%, individual goal may vary)

This is a blood test done to check your overall blood sugar control for the past 2-3 months. Your A1C level will vary from test to test. Having a lower A1C level will reduce the risk of diabetes problems.

**Fasting Lipid Panel** – Have this checked every year.

(**Ideal:** Total cholesterol less than 200 mg/dL

Triglycerides less than 150 mg/dL



HDL [good cholesterol]

men – 40 mg/dL or higher; women – 50 mg/dL or higher

LDL [bad cholesterol]

less than 70 or 100 mg/dL – individualize)

This is a blood test to check the amount of fat in your blood. Too much fat can clog your arteries and can cause poor blood flow in your body.

## Kidney Function Tests



Albumin-to-creatinine ratio test every year.

(**Ideal:** Is less than 30 mg/g)

This urine test checks for microalbuminuria, tiny amounts of protein in your urine.

Serum Creatinine test every year to estimate GFR.

(**Ideal:** estimated GFR greater than 60)

This blood test is used to estimate your GFR. The eGFR tells how well your kidneys are filtering waste and if your kidneys are damaged.

**Tuberculosis Test (TB test)** per provider.

(**Ideal:** Negative test)

Having diabetes puts you at a greater risk of getting tuberculosis. A TB skin test is the only way to test for TB infection or disease. Ask your doctor if you should be tested for TB.

# Recommended Care When You Have Diabetes

## EXAMS

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### Diabetes Visit/Complete Physical Exam



**Have a diabetes visit every 3-6 months.**

This is a good time to talk with your provider about any diabetes concerns you have.

**Have a complete physical every year.**

This exam provides preventive health care to keep you healthy.

### Dilated Retinal Eye Exam



**Have this exam done every year.**

Your eye doctor will put drops in your eyes to help see the back of your eyes. This is the only way to find out if high blood sugars have caused any damage to your eyes. Diabetes can cause vision loss and blindness.

### Dental Exam/Oral Check



**Have a dental exam every 6 months. Have your mouth, teeth, and gums checked at every office visit.**

See your dentist for routine cleanings and exams. Your health care provider can check your mouth, teeth, and gums for problems. Mouth infections and gum disease are more common in people with diabetes. Treatment is helpful if problems are found early.

### Foot Exam



**Have your provider do a complete foot exam with a monofilament and a tuning fork every year.**

**Take your shoes and socks off so your provider can check your feet at each office visit.**

Check your own feet each day. You may not always be able to feel a foot problem so look at your feet each day to notice changes or problems. High blood sugars can cause poor blood flow and loss of feeling in your feet. A small cut or blister can quickly turn into a big problem without the right care. Talk to your provider right away about any changes you notice.

# Recommended Care When You Have Diabetes

## EXAMS

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### Blood Pressure (BP)



Have this checked every time you visit your provider. **(Ideal: Less than 130/80 mmHg for most people with diabetes)**

Blood pressure (BP) measures how well your heart is pumping blood. High BP can be treated and controlled with medicine. You may need more than one kind of medicine to control BP to meet your individual goal.

### Emotional/Sexual Health



**Tell your provider if you feel depressed or have sexual health concerns.**

Everyone has down, sad, or stressful days that can cause you to feel depressed. Depression can keep you from doing your best self-care. Sexual concerns can also cause you to feel sad or down. Talk with your health care provider about reliable treatment options that can help.

### Tobacco Use



**Stop using tobacco.**

Tobacco use causes many health problems. Once you start using tobacco products, it is very hard to stop. There are many ways to quit. Choose a quit plan that will work for you and get support for yourself. Call 1-800-QUITNOW for help.

## SHOTS

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### Flu, Pneumonia and Hepatitis B Shots



**Have the flu shot every fall. Have a pneumonia shot once, then as needed. Have the hepatitis B series of shots once.** Talk to your doctor to get a flu

shot, pneumonia shot and the hepatitis B series. Having diabetes puts you at greater risk of these diseases. These shots can help lower your risk of getting the flu, pneumonia or hepatitis.

# Recommended Care When You Have Diabetes

## EDUCATION FOR HEALTHY LIVING

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### Physical Activity Level



Find an activity you enjoy doing and safely increase the amount of time until you reach your goal.

**(Ideal:** 150 minutes/week spread over at least 3 days)

Any physical activity (for example, walking) will help lower your blood sugar level and help you feel better.

### Healthy Eating/Meal Choices



See a registered dietitian when first diagnosed, for 3-4 visits over 3-6 months, then every year or as needed.

A registered dietitian can help you learn how to make healthy meal choices and teach you healthy serving sizes. If you are overweight, any weight loss can be helpful. A healthy weight helps your insulin work better.

### Diabetes Self-Care Education



See a diabetes educator when first diagnosed with diabetes, then every 6-12 months or as needed.

A Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) can help you learn how to self-manage your diabetes. Learning about diabetes will take time, but it will help you make healthy choices every day.

### Blood Sugar Testing



Ask your health care provider how often you should test. **(Ideal:** Before meals less than 130 mg/dL and after meals less than 180 mg/dL)

Checking blood sugar levels helps you know how food, physical activity, medicine, and stress/illness cause your blood sugar levels to change. Know what blood sugar range is best for you. Do not throw lancets or needles in your regular garbage or trash; instead, use an approved container. For information on throwing your needles away, see the DNR resource on the back page of this booklet.



# Personal Diabetes Care Record

## LAB/OTHER TESTS

Goal	Date	Date	Date	Date
A1C <7% - individualized every 3-6 mo.				
Fasting Lipid Panel - yearly				
Total Cholesterol <200 mg/dL				
Triglycerides <150 mg/dL				
LDL <70 <b>or</b> <100 mg/dL (circle)				
HDL ≥40 mg/dL men; ≥50 mg/dL women				
Albumin-to-creatinine ratio <30 mg/g - yearly				
Serum creatinine to estimate kidney function (eGFR) - yearly				
TB test - per provider				

## EXAMS

Dilated Eye Exam - yearly				
Dental Exam - every 6 months				
Oral Check - every visit				
Foot Check - visual check every visit				
Complete Foot Exam - yearly				
Diabetes Visit - every 3-6 months				
Complete Physical Exam - yearly				
Blood Pressure <130/80 mmHg - check each visit				
Emotional/Sexual Health - discuss each visit				
Tobacco Use - discuss each visit				

## SHOTS

Flu shot - each fall				
Pneumonia shot/Hepatitis B series - once				

## EDUCATION

Physical Activity Level - discuss each visit				
Registered Dietitian - at diagnosis, for 3-4 visits over 3-6 mo., then annually				
Self-Management Education - at diagnosis, every 6-12 months, or as needed				
Home Blood Sugar Testing - review each visit				

# Self-Care Goals and Action Steps

Choose one or more self-care goal(s) below.

Be Active

Eat Healthy Foods

Take Medication

Monitor/ Plan Ahead

Problem Solve

Seek Support

Reduce Risk

Examples of Action Steps:

- ☐ Reduce portion sizes
- ☐ Be physically active each day
- ☐ Monitor blood glucose each day
- ☐ Take medicine each day
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Join a support group
- ☐ Stop smoking
- ☐ Get diabetes check-ups
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

My Action Steps: (What will I do?)

My Barriers: (What is in my way?)

My Barrier Busters: (How will I remove the barrier?)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Talk with Your Provider



Be an active member of your own health care team. Below are a few tips for talking to your health care provider.

- Prepare a list of questions to ask and list the most important questions first.
- Ask a family member or friend to go with you to take notes about information told to you.
- Tell your provider about any current health concerns bothering you.
- Share a list of all your current medicines, vitamins, and supplements you take.
- Share personal information that could be causing stress even if you're feeling embarrassed.
- Ask for more information or an explanation if something is not clear.
- Find out when you should set up a follow-up visit.

## Questions for your provider:

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Take this self-care booklet, your blood sugar log booklet, and blood sugar monitor with you to each health care appointment.

Health Care Provider Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Additional Resources:**

### **American Diabetes Association**

1-800-342-2383  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

### **American Dietetic Association**

1-800-877-1600  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

### **American Association of Diabetes Educators**

Find a Diabetes Educator in your area: 1-800-338-3633  
[www.diabeteseducator.org/DiabetesEducation/Find.html](http://www.diabeteseducator.org/DiabetesEducation/Find.html)

### **American Heart Association**

(414) 271-9999  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

### **American Podiatric Medical Association**

1-800-366-8227  
[www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org)

### **National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin**

1-800-543-6393  
[www.kidneywi.org](http://www.kidneywi.org)

### **National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC)**

1-800-860-8747  
[www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov)

### **National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP)**

1-888-693-6337  
[www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov)

### **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**

### **Diabetes Prevention and Control Program (DPCP)**

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/diabetes](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/diabetes)

### **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**

1-888-936-7463  
[www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/HouseholdSharps.html](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/HouseholdSharps.html)

### **Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line**

1-800-784-8669 or 1-800-QUITNOW  
[www.ctri.wisc.edu/quitline.html](http://www.ctri.wisc.edu/quitline.html)



Developed by the  
Wisconsin Diabetes Prevention and Control Program  
Wisconsin Diabetes Advisory Group and other partners  
Division of Public Health  
Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
P- 43081 (5/12)